

Government communication that the public can understand and use.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **AGENCY.**—The term “agency” means an Executive agency, as defined under section 105 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) **COVERED DOCUMENT.**—The term “covered document” means any document (other than a regulation) issued by an agency to the public, including documents and other text released in electronic form.

(3) **PLAIN WRITING.**—The term “plain writing” means writing that the intended audience can readily understand and use because that writing is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices of plain writing.

SEC. 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) **REQUIREMENT TO USE PLAIN WRITING IN NEW DOCUMENTS.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, each agency shall use plain writing in every covered document of the agency issued or substantially revised.

(b) **GUIDANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—

(A) **DEVELOPMENT.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Office of Management and Budget shall develop guidance on implementing the requirements of subsection (a).

(B) **ISSUANCE.**—The Office of Management and Budget shall issue the guidance developed under subparagraph (A) to agencies as a circular.

(2) **INTERIM GUIDANCE.**—Before the issuance of guidance under paragraph (1), agencies may follow the guidance of—

(A) the writing guidelines developed by the Plain Language Action and Information Network; or

(B) guidance provided by the head of the agency that is consistent with the guidelines referred to under subparagraph (A).

SEC. 5. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) **INITIAL REPORT.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report that describes how the agency intends to meet the following objectives:

(1) Communicating the requirements of this Act to agency employees.

(2) Training agency employees in plain writing.

(3) Meeting the requirement under section 4(a).

(4) Ensuring ongoing compliance with the requirements of this Act.

(5) Designating a senior official to be responsible for implementing the requirements of this Act.

(b) **ANNUAL AND OTHER REPORTS.**—

(1) **AGENCY REPORTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The head of each agency shall submit reports on compliance with this Act to the Office of Management and Budget.

(B) **SUBMISSION DATES.**—The Office of Management and Budget shall notify each agency of the date each report under subparagraph (A) is required for submission to enable the Office of Management and Budget to meet the requirements of paragraph (2).

(2) **REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**—The Office of Management and Budget shall review agency reports submitted under paragraph (1) using the guidance issued under section 4(b)(1)(B) and submit a report on the progress of agencies to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives—

(A) annually for the first 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) once every 3 years thereafter.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Violent Islamist Extremism: al-Shabaab Recruitment in America.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, at 10 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled “S.J. Res. 7 and H.J. Res. 21: A Constitutional Amendment Concerning Senate Vacancies” on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, at 10 a.m., in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF CERTAIN IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1127, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1127) to extend certain immigration programs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1127) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CONGRATULATING LITHUANIA ON ITS 1000TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign

Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 70, and that the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 70) congratulating the people of the Republic of Lithuania on the 1000th anniversary of Lithuania and celebrating the rich history of Lithuania.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize an important moment for the people of Lithuania. Last month, Lithuania celebrated its 1000 year anniversary.

Along with my distinguished colleagues, Senator VOINOVICH from Ohio and Senator FEINSTEIN from California, I have submitted a commemorative resolution for this occasion.

As the birthplace of my mother, who came to the United States from Lithuania with her parents when she was just 2 years old, Lithuania holds a special place in my heart.

One thousand years sounds like a long time, especially in our relatively young United States. But historians have noted that the name of the area now known as Lithuania first appeared in European records, in the German Annals of Quedlinburg.

Traditions of Lithuanian statehood date back to the early Middle Ages, when Duke Mindaugas united an assortment of Baltic Tribes to defend themselves from attacks by the Teutonic Knights. From these early roots, Lithuania grew to encompass territory stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea by the end of the 14th century.

This nation, which once was the largest in Europe, has seen extraordinary struggles during the last century. It suffered 50 years of occupation, by both Nazi and Soviet forces.

Throughout that time, the U.S. Congress stood in support of Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors, Estonia and Latvia, and refused to recognize the Soviet occupation. In 2007, the United States and Lithuania celebrated 85 years of continuous diplomatic relations.

Today, Lithuania is a thriving free-market democracy and a strong ally of the United States. As a member of the European Union and NATO, Lithuania contributes to peace and security in Europe. Lithuania also contributes to global stability and peace building through its contributions to missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo and Georgia.

When I traveled to Lithuania a few years ago and visited the village of my mother and grandparents, I was welcomed warmly by President Adamkus, who I have known for many years, and the people of Lithuania. I was so proud, not only to see my family's roots, but to see how far Lithuania has come, despite the many difficulties it endured in the last century.